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THESIS

CLOSING THE GAP: MEASURING THE SOCIAL IDENTITY OF TERRORISTS

by

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September 2008

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Studies of terrorism today focus on psychological and behavioral aspects of individuals. Most research shows that using a single model in an attempt to profile terrorists psychologically is problematic, if not impossible. However, using two well-established theories from social psychology, Social Identity Theory and Social Distance Theory, allows the development of a practical model to develop a social profile of a terrorist group. From that, it is further possible to use the resulting social profile to compare terrorist groups against each other in order to develop predictive models as to the propensity of violence of a particular group. To test this, the research within this thesis uses open source interviews of the terrorist group HAMAS and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), taken from on-line magazines, on-line journals, on-line newspapers, and official web sites, to serve as respondents to a survey instrument developed from other social identity studies. The results of this research shows that a social profile of a terrorist group can be developed from standard social identity measurement survey instruments, and it is possible to develop practical methods for comparing groups, based on their social identities, to predict their propensity to violence.

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CLOSING THE GAP: MEASURING THE SOCIAL IDENTITY OF TERRORISTS

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I. INTRODUCTION

On April 24, 1995, the *New York Times* received a letter containing the following paragraph:

> In our previous letter to you we called ourselves anarchists. Since "anarchist" is a vague word that has been applied to a variety of attitudes, further explanation is needed. We call ourselves anarchists because we would like, ideally, to break down all society into very small, completely autonomous units. Regrettably, we don't see any clear road to this goal, so we leave it to the indefinite future. Our more immediate goal, which we think may be attainable at some time during the next several decades, is the destruction of the worldwide industrial system. Through our bombings we hope to promote social instability in industrial society, propagate anti-industrial ideas and give encouragement to those who hate the industrial system.[1]

This statement contains typical words and phrases seen in many other declarations and propaganda distributed by terrorist organizations around the world. References to "anarchists," "destruction of the worldwide industrial system," and "bombings" are regular occurrences when terrorist groups describe their organizations goals. However, what is unique about the statement above is that one of the most notorious "lone wolf" terrorists in modern times, Theodore Kaczynski, aka "The Unabomber" wrote this as part of his revolutionary campaign.

What is it about a self-proclaimed loner and "hermit" that draw them to relate to organizations and groups, even to go so far as to use the word "we" throughout his manifesto "Industrial Society and its Future"? There are forces at work that go beyond simple psychology making individuals favor inclusion in groups, and terrorists are no exception.

Terrorism is not a new problem. Societies have struggled for hundreds of years, maybe even thousands, to understand the violence caused by radicalized individuals.

[1] Unpublished letter sent by Theodore Kaczynski to the *New York Times*, on April 25, 1995. Taken from the "Lectric Law Library," http://www.lectlaw.com/files/cur55.htm, (accessed on September 4, 2008).

Recently, in the late 20th century, psychology and behavioral studies have focused terrorism research with an eye toward predicating or profiling individual behavior. Unfortunately, despite contributing to the overall body of knowledge, scholars have not been particularly fruitful in developing models predicting or profiling individual terrorist behavior. Part of the reason for this disappointment is the focus on individuals instead of the groups they belong. This focus is understandable; after all, it is a person committing the violent acts so researching individuals would seem like the successful approach.

A more comprehensive approach, incorporating group dynamics, organizational motivations, and the impact of social needs, is better suited to addressing the terrorist problem. Very few terrorists act alone, and those that do usually act in support of a religious or political cause of a specific organization. It is imperative to research the impact of social forces on individuals as they pertain to terrorism in order to understand how these organizations form, develop, and ultimately dissipate.

The discipline of social psychology provides theories to further the understanding of the terrorism dilemma; by analyzing theories of social psychology and developing practical applications from them, it is possible to profile terrorist organizations. Put another way; to understand an adversary we need to change the way we view terrorists. Instead of looking at the "individual in the group," we need to look at the "group in the individual."[2]

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the discussion in the literature review of this thesis, the scholarship today regarding terrorism demonstrates a lack of practical methods for profiling terrorist organizations. Attempts at using psychological models for predicting violence in terrorists have yet to be successful; there needs to be a broader view of terrorist behavior, more than just an attempt at a psychological picture.

[2] Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*, (London: Routlege, 1988), 17.

There is research within social psychology using the measurement of social identity and social distance that is useful for terrorism studies, but it is rare. In today's global environment, it is imperative that research help counterterrorism practitioners by developing specific, practical tools to counter the asymmetrical threat. Measurements developed using a Likert scale to develop profiles of terrorist organizations could meet this need. This leads to the research question posed by this thesis:

> *How can Social Identity Theory and Social Distance Theory advance development of a practical tool for measuring the social identity of a terrorist organization and predicting the proclivity of a group to engage in violent behavior?*

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II. DISCUSSION

A. SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Throughout the world, there is an innate need among individuals to belong to social groups, whether it is a church, civic organization, sports team, or family; everyone seeks acceptance by some group.[3] Wanting to belong to a particular group shapes our behaviors as we begin to anticipate the possible benefits of belonging to the desired group. Additionally, once an individual belongs to a group, and a sense of saliency sets in, one begins to compare themselves to others who are not part of their group. This shapes an individual's self-concept, and influences the way an individual treats others.[4]

Understanding the need of acceptance by groups leads into the discussion of Social Identity Theory. A sense of belonging fills a social and psychological need of individuals, an idea originated by Henri Tajfel. From his description, the definition of Social Identity Theory is:

> The individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain groups along with some emotional value or significance to him of that group membership… can be assumed that an individual will tend to remain a member of a group or seek membership of new groups if these groups have some contribution to make to the positive aspects of his social identity. [5]

Along with the definition above, Tajfel asserted that an individual's social identity is comprised of three identifiable components:[6]

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[3] Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 18.

[4] Steve Hinkle and Rupert Brown, "Intergroup comparisons and social identity: some links and lacunae," in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, ed. by Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), 48.

[5] Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, (New York: Springer-Verlag), 29 which references H. Tajfel, "Social categorization," English manuscript of 'La Categorisation social', in S. Moscovici (ed.) *Introduction a la Psychologie Sociale* Vol. 1. Paris: Larousse.

[6] David W. Brannan, Philip F. Esler, & N.T. Anders Strindberg, "Talking to 'Terrorist's': Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, (University of St. Andrews, Scotland: Taylor & Francis, January 2001), Vol. 24, No. 1, 9.

- Cognitive component – The individual's knowledge that he or she is a member of a group.

- Evaluative component – That element which comprises positive or negative aspects of belonging to a group.

- Emotional component – The emotions associated with group membership and with the comparisons between those within the group to those outside of the group.

These three components work together to develop the "total" social identity of an individual. Describing each component within the context of terrorism:

- Cognitive component – An individual is or becomes radicalized and supports the terrorist organization. This is an awareness of being a member of the terrorist group. They have a consciousness of the group, its motives and desires, and loyalty to the organization. When an individual from an environmentalist activist group parades openly in support of animal rights, they recognize the solidarity that comes with marching with the group, the desired political outcomes of their actions, and a sense of working toward a "calling."

- Evaluative component -– The perceived measurable, attainable value a terrorist gets by belonging to the group. For example, a white supremacist could have increased status within the immediate community by repressing the targeted minority group and gain a sense of power over minorities. For religiously inspired terrorists groups like Al Qaeda, it could mean the benefit of going directly to heaven, having family members go to heaven, or becoming a heroic martyr in the eyes of the immediate community.

- Emotional Component – For a terrorist, it is the "love" they have for their "brother in arms," and hatred they have for the "enemy." An example would be the continuous and systematic loathing for the "infidel" from a religiously inspired terrorist organization like Al Qaeda.

Social Identity Theory states that individuals join a group, or seek membership in a group, because they perceive a social and psychological benefit from becoming part of that group. Expanding on this, it is a basic premise of psychology that individuals exhibit behaviors that provide them with positive reinforcement, a sense of security, and good

feelings.[7] One way of fulfilling a portion of this compulsion for positive reinforcement is the desire of being a part of a group. These psychological urges for positive feelings set in motion a drive to join organizations or groups that will ultimately provide some of these positive feelings.

In order for individuals to feel positive about themselves, and the group they associate with, there must be some positive attributes associated with being a part of the group. This stands in direct comparison to perceived negative attributes of those outside of the group. According to Social Identity Theory, members of a group compare themselves with others who are not part of their organization and seek to maximize specific differences, particularly differences positive to themselves, to ensure their self-esteem builds, or retains, a beneficial self-image.[8] Taken to one extreme, groups could conceivably see those outside of the group as threatening and power-seeking, giving motivation toward their elimination.[9]

Social Identity Theory also provides an understanding of what makes individuals act the way they do within the context of joining, or desiring to join, a group. To explore this concept in more detail, it is necessary to ask two pertinent questions regarding Social Identity Theory: Why do individuals seek membership in groups and what are the specific behavioral aspects that draw an individual toward one group as opposed to another group?

Scholars have debated for centuries what makes individuals want to be a part of a society; in 350 BC, Aristotle stated, "A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature."[10] Most do agree that over the millennia, individuals have gained protection and access to resources when participating in a group.[11] Joining an organized society

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[7] An idea popularized by Sigmund Freud with the concept of the *id.* For an example, see Karl Bowman, "Review" [untitled], *The American Journal of Psychology,* (University of Illinois Press: October 1928), Vol. 40, No. 4, 644, http://www.jstor.org (accessed on September 4, 2008).

[8] Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications,* 22.

[9] Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications,* 34.

[10] Aristotle, "The Politics," translated by Benjamin Jowett, taken from http://jim.com/arispol.htm (accessed on September 13, 2008).

[11] Fathali M. Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context,* (Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2008), 28.

provides an evolutionary edge, a concept generally agreed upon within sociological and anthropological research, making this innate desire rooted in human genetics.[12] It is easy to adapt this concept to modern times as individuals throughout the world join organizations and engage with families in order to develop a sense of belonging.

The second question, "What specific emotional components contribute to which groups or organizations individuals seek out" is much more critical to the research of terrorism motivations. What factors, be they cultural, behavioral, or environmental, predispose an individual to be more attracted to one group as opposed to another?[13] As stated above, sociology and social psychology have generally established that individuals seek out membership in groups to provide a sense of purpose and self worth. According to Moghaddam, "Considerable evidence has accumulated to suggest that people are more positively disposed toward others who are more similar to them."[14] Although most people would see this as obvious, it does not address the issue of why one person would choose to join a violent terrorist organization while another from a similar cultural, social, and economic background would not.

B. CULTURE AS A PART OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, culture can be defined as "[t]he totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought."[15] As stated in *Social Identifications* by Hogg & Abrams, a social psychological perspective of culture is:

> [W]hile a society is made up of individuals, it is patterned into relatively distinct social groups and categories, and people's views, opinions, and practices are acquired from those groups to which they belong. These groups can be considered to have an objective existence to the extent that

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[12] See, for instance Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism*, 102-103.

[13] For brevity, environmental, behavioral, psychological, and cultural aspects will be referred to simply as external inputs.

[14] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism*, 136.

[15] Culture. Dictionary.com. *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/culture (accessed on July 12, 2008).

> members of different groups believe different things, dress in different ways, hold different values, speak different languages, live in different places, and generally behave differently.[16]

Also supporting this, Moghaddam states, "cultural systems influence the particular ways in which identity needs are manifested."[17] Further parsing the concept of external components leads to another reference to culture. As discussed in Brannan, et al:

> In this context [the sociological aspects of terrorism], however, we are interested in the immaterial or social dimensions of culture, that is, the unique collection of social roles, institutions, values, ideas, and symbols operative in every group, which radically conditions the way in which its members see the world and respond to its challenges.[18]

As represented in these papers, it is clear the significant impact culture has on the development of the social identity of an individual. As discussed in Chapter II, Section B, later in this thesis, various aspects of culture can be "parsed out" and shown to drive individuals to join one group or another, affecting their social identity. Culture provides a workable context to begin comparisons necessary for the measurement of social identity of terrorists.

C. SOCIAL IDENTITY IN CONTEXT

To help understand Social Identity Theory, it is useful to think in terms of "in-groups" vs. "out-groups." The "out-group" is everyone not associated with the desired organization, or the "in-group." This in-group vs. out-group perception can take the form of a healthy scholastic rivalry to the more serious hostility of gang warfare. Applying Social Identity Theory within the context of terrorism illustrates the terrorist group vs. target group of that terrorist organization, such as a white supremacist group targeting an African-American population, the PLO targeting Israelis, or Al Qaeda targeting U.S. citizens.

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[16] Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 2.

[17] Moghaddam, *Multiculturalism*, 100.

[18] Brannan et al, "Talking with Terrorists," 15.

A common example of Social Identity Theory is sports fans identifying with a professional team.[19] The fans derive their passion to support a team, according to Social Identity Theory, from the psychological and sociological benefit they get from being associated with that particular team. Even though these individuals do not participate on the team, they feel the victory of a win or the tragedy of a loss just as if they were on the field.[20]

In yet another example of Tajfel's premise, a Muslim individual who is part of the "out-group" of a predominately-Christian society would gravitate to an "in-group" where they would gain positive feelings. This example manifested itself in France where Muslim female youths refused to remove their headscarves while at school as directed by French officials.[21] This is similar to the situation in the United Kingdom where Muslim youths feel as if the general British populous and the British Government are ostracizing them. As stated by BBC Online, "What is clear is that it is not just about how their world changed following the September 11 attacks - it's about what it is to be British and Muslim, and disaffection with their place in society."[22]

In probably the closest example to terrorist organizations, "street-gangs" offer an illustrative example of how individuals perceive (or actually receive) a physical and psychological sense of protection and belonging when joining an organization. The similarities to terrorist organizations are particularly evident since many factors influencing individuals to join violent groups are the same such as age, ethnicity, and

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[19] For example, see Peter C. Alegi, "Playing to the Gallery? Sport, Cultural Performance, and Social Identity in South Africa, 1920's-1945," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, (Boston: Boston University, 2002), Vol. 35, No. 1, 17-38 and briefly in Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "We and Us: Two Modes of Group Identification," *Journal of Peace Research*, (Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications, November 1995), Vol. 32, No. 4, 427-436.

[20] This example is taken from Merritt Postmen, "Social Identity Theory: Sports Affiliation and Self-Esteem," *Living in a Social World*, Spring 1998, http://www.units.muohio.edu/psybersite/fans/sit.shtml (accessed on July 29, 2008).

[21] Caitlin Killian, "The Other Side of the Veil: North African Women in France Respond to the Headscarf Affair," *Gender and Society*, (Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications, August 2003), Vol. 17, No. 4, 567-590.

[22] Dominic Casciani, "Disaffection among British Muslim youth," BBC news online, March 31, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/3586421.stm, (accessed on July 11, 2008).

culture. One can see how the details of the motives for joining terrorist organizations or street gangs are different, but the underlying concepts that drive membership are the same.[23]

D. SUMMARY

In sum, Social Identity Theory states that individuals join organizations based on a real or perceived benefit to joining that group. Looking at the foundations of this, two different components emerge:

1) The evolutionary drive for individuals to seek membership in groups is roughly "equal" among individuals; therefore, it is impossible to single this out as a causal factor of an individual to join one organization over another organization, and 2) There are individual external components that drive an individual to choose one group over another. One portion of these components is culture. From the definitions and statements above, individual elements within culture include language, a sense of duty, relationships with peers, and loyalty to others. All of these components will be critical in the development of a methodology and data gathering later referred to in this thesis.

Therefore, at its core components, Social Identity Theory models how an individual behaves based, in part, on specific external inputs. Language, religion, relationship with peers, concept of loyalty, and other forms of culture all have an impact, to varying degrees, on how a person feels about themselves, their place in society, and how they act/react to others. Figure 1 below represents this concept.

[23] Alvin Y. Wang, "Pride and prejudice in high school gang members," *Adolescence,* (San Diego, Ca.: Libra Publishers, Summer 1994), Vol. 29, No. 114, 279-292.

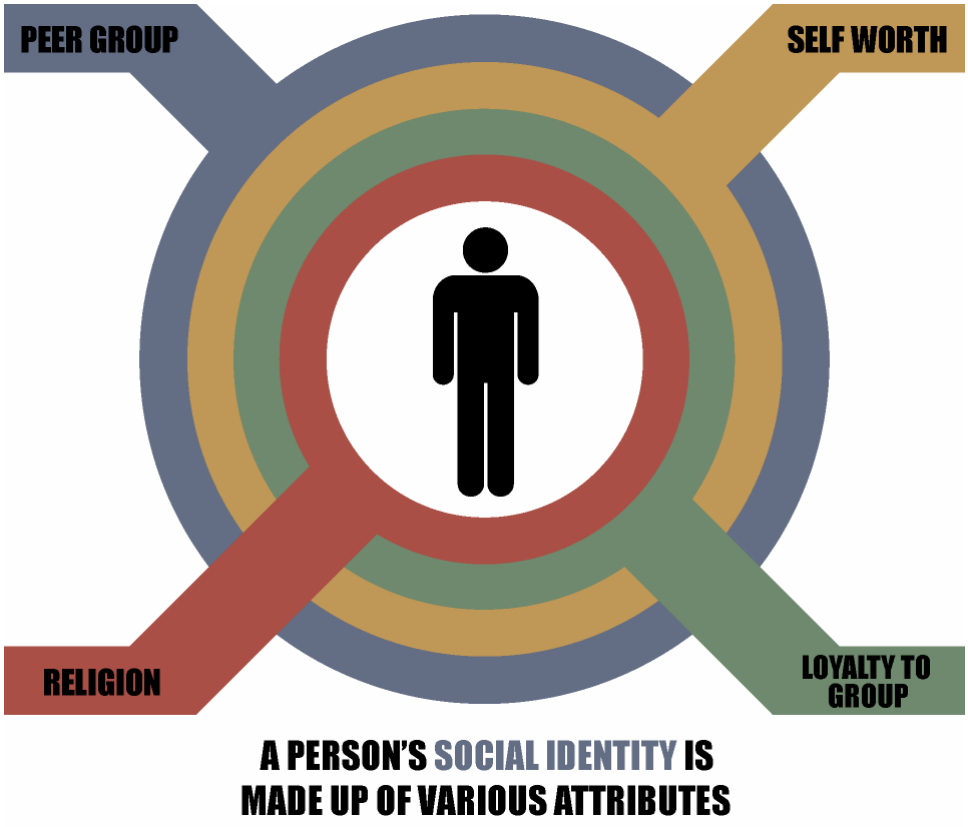

Figure 1. Social Identity Attributes.

E. SOCIAL DISTANCE THEORY

Central to Social Distance Theory is the idea of an emotional distance, rather than geographical distance, between groups of people who are culturally, linguistically, and ethnically different. The concept of social distance, originally developed by Robert Park in 1924, flourished in the 1930s when Emory S. Bogardus developed tools to measure disparities between ethnic and religious groups.[24] By using a survey instrument asking seven questions regarding an individual's feeling toward a different group under study (race, religion, etc.), he was able to develop a metric that could provide an indication of

[24] Carolyn A. Owen, Howard C. Eisner, and Thomas R. McFaul, "A Half Century of Social Distance Research: National Replication of the Bogardus' Studies," *Sociology and Social Research*, (Los Angeles, Ca., October 1981) Vol. 66, No. 1, 81. Emory Bogardus, "A Social Distance Scale," *Sociology & Social Research*, (Los Angeles, Ca.: University of Southern California, Jan/Feb 1933), Vol. 17, Issue 3.

the social distance between individuals of groups. Bogardus's original goal was an attempt to measure differences between groups over time to get a sense of the social changes taking place within society.[25]

Social Distance Theory compares the "distance" between individuals or an individual and a group from a sociological perspective. It can provide a metric for "the degree of sympathetic understanding that exists between two persons or between a person and a group."[26] The closer two individuals are in their common views, culture, and general understanding of the world they inhabit, the "closer" they are in their sociological "distance." This applies in many different instances, from race relations to religion. Based on this theory, two individuals, both Catholic, would be sociologically closer to each other than either would be to an individual who was Jewish.[27]

One study that provides an excellent example of implementation of Social Distance Theory is Jessie Runner's paper, "Social Distance in Adolescent Relationships." She successfully illustrates the social distance of teenage girls relative to a variety of different individuals and groups, including school friends, families, and church groups.[28] Runner's research demonstrates how various groups and individuals, placed on a scale representing their respective distances from another individual, can provide the ability to ascertain an individual's attitudes towards other individuals or groups that are similar to attitudes of groups already known. This will have significant implications for the hypothesis of this thesis discussed in Chapter III.

The concept of social distance can be refined to incorporate distinct differences between social groups, and some researches even specify orders of social geometry:

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[25] Owen, "A Half Century of Social Distance Research," 80.

[26] Bogardus, "A Social Distance Scale," 265.

[27] Numerous studies have also applied Social Distance Theory in an attempt to measure racism and integration, some examples include Gerald Kleinpenning and Louk Hagendoorn, "Forms of Racism and the Cumulative Dimension of Ethnic Attitudes," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, (Washington D.C.: American Sociological Association, March 1993), Vol. 56, No. 1, 21-36, and Maykel Verkuyten and Barbara Kinket, "Social Distances in a Multi-Ethnic Society: The Ethnic Hierarchy among Dutch Preadolescents," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, (Washington D.C.: American Sociological Association, March 2000) Vol. 64, No. 1, 75-85.

[28] Jessie R. Runner, "Social Distance in Adolescent Relationships," *The American Journal of Sociology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, November 1937), Vol. 23, No. 3, 428-439.

> Social space has various dimensions – horizontal (such as degrees of intimacy and integration); vertical (inequality); corporate (involvement of groups); Cultural (such as language and religion); and normative (social control).[29]

Additionally, there is a body of research showing collective violence, of which terrorism is a form, is a result of greater social distances.[30] As described by Senechal de la Roche's essay "Collective Violence as Social Control," four variables contribute to an increase in collective violence.

- Relational Distance – Relational distance describes the degree to which individuals interact or "The greater the relational distance between parties in a conflict, the greater is the likelihood and severity of collective violence."[31]

- Cultural Distance – Cultural distance represents those things such as language and religion. "Cultural distance is measurable by differences between groups in the expressive aspects of their social life, such as language, dress, religion, and art. As these differences increase, so do the probability and severity of all forms of collective violence, whether lynching, rioting, vigilantism, or terrorism."[32]

- Functional Independence - The extent to which individuals and groups cooperate be it socially, economically, or otherwise. "People are comparatively unlikely to attack those who are indispensable to their well-being."[33]

- Inequality – The disparity of status, measured in economic, social, and other levels.[34]

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[29] Donald Black, "The Geometry of Terrorism," *Sociological Theory*, (Washington D.C.: American Sociological Association, March 2004), Vol. 22, No. 1, 15.

[30] See, for example Roberta Senechal de la Roche, "Why is Collective Violence Collective," *Sociological Theory*, (Washington D.C.: American Sociological Association, July 2001), Vol. 19, No. 2 and Rudolph J. Rummel, "Is Collective Violence Correlated with Social Pluralism?" *Journal of Peace Research*, (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications: May 1997), Vol. 34, No. 2.

[31] Senechal de la Roche, "Why is Collective Violence Collective," 106.

[32] Senechal de la Roche, "Why is Collective Violence Collective," 108-109.

[33] Senechal de la Roche, "Why is Collective Violence Collective," 111.

[34] Roberta Senechal de la Roche, "Collective Violence as Social Control," *Sociological Forum*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, March 1996), Vol. 11, No. 1, 105.

These factors are important because in all instances they are measurable. If researchers develop methods to measure these social distances, then it makes it possible to analyze the differences between groups in a variety of ways, including their propensity to engage in violent behaviors.

F. AN INTEGRATION OF THEORIES

As described in the section above, there is a correlation between the social distances of groups as a precursor to increased violence between two groups. Evidence also suggests from Social Identity Theory research that violent tendencies result from in-groups and out-groups differentiation; demonstrated by a study done in 1954 with a group of 24 boys, divided into two camps of twelve.[35] These boys were of similar background, similar age, and did not know each other at the beginning of the camp. Over the course of a five-day period, the two different groups separated and each was encouraged to bond in a variety of ways. As the groups became aware of the presence of the other group of boys and placed in situations where they came in contact, distinctive signs of in-group bias in the forms of name-calling, rude gestures, etc. began to appear. These behaviors quickly developed (over the course of two days) into hostile, almost "vicious" feelings toward each other. The "Robber's Cave Experiment," as it was come to be called, was one of the first pieces of empirical research showing how difference in social identity could result in violence between in-groups and out-groups.

If we integrate the concept of social distance with the premise of social identity, it is possible to see where there is overlap that can be of value to the counter terrorism community. Since both Social Distance Theory and Social Identity Theory serve as theories relative to groups and have aspects influenced by external factors (i.e. culture), the possibility exists to combine these two theories as a medium for comparison of two groups. This leads to using differences in social identity as the yardstick for measuring the social distance. If we can measure the social identity of the two groups, we can

[35] Study done by Muzafer Sherif, et al, nicknamed "The Robbers Cave Experiment" named for the location, Robbers Cave, Oklahoma, as cited in Hogg & Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 44.

develop a comparison between them with respect to an external factor, such as culture, and a social profile of the groups can be determined. See Figure 2 for an interpretation of this concept.

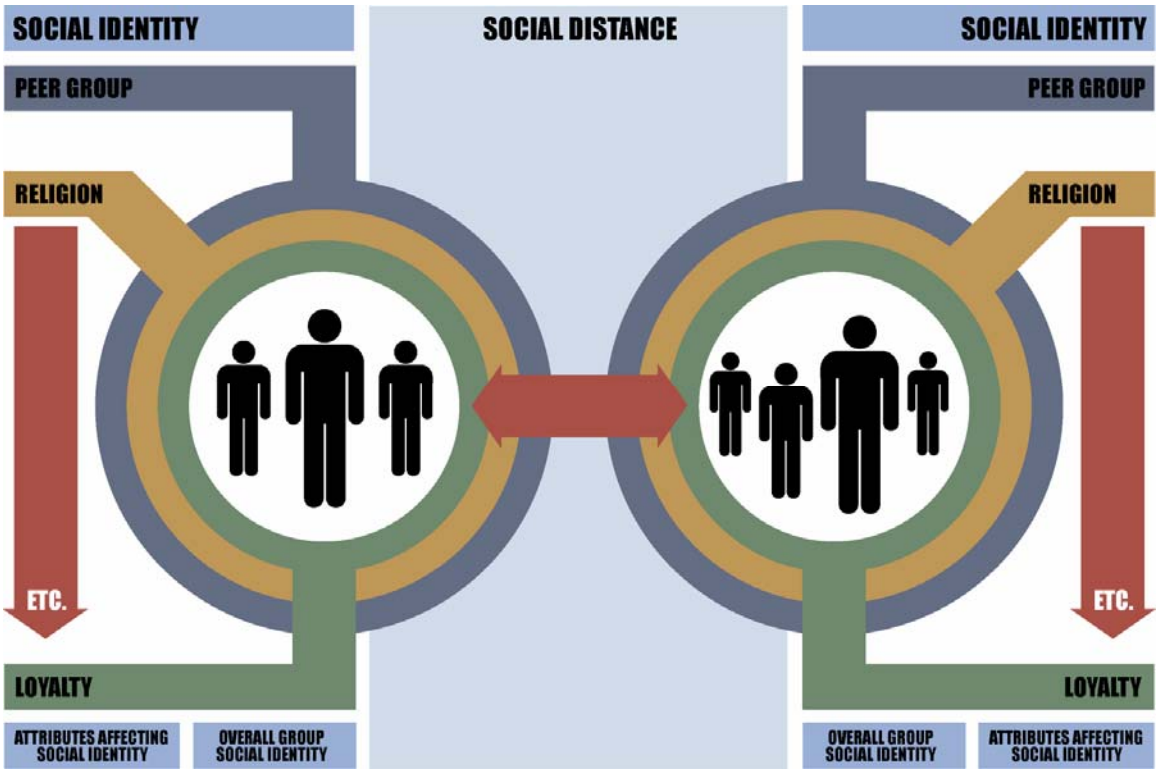

Figure 2. Social Distance Incorporating Social Identity.

III. HYPOTHESIS

Building practical applications from Social Identity Theory and Social Distance Theory for use by counter terrorism practitioners is an immense challenge. It will require years of additional research to develop fully. Despite this, there is a tremendous body of published knowledge focusing on understanding social identity and its applicability to various types of groups, organizations, and cultures. There is more than enough information available to begin the process of applying this to terrorism research. Using the information already published regarding Social Identity Theory, then integrating this with another social psychological theory, Social Distance Theory, leads to the following hypotheses:

I. It is possible to develop and implement a survey instrument, incorporating a Likert scale, to measure the social identity of a known violent terrorist organization. This results in a quantifiable number (or numbers) representing the social identity of that terrorist organization, which describes a social profile of that terrorist group.

II. The same survey instrument can measure the social identity of a different organization, also resulting in a quantifiable number describing the social profile of that organization.

III. With a social identity of both organizations having been calculated using a common survey instrument, it is now possible to compare these values using Social Distance Theory and make presumptions as to the proclivity of violence by the second group.

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IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

Over the centuries, terrorists groups have surfaced, expanded, and ended.[36] This cycle will continue, but that does not suggest governments, academicians, and militaries should stop working to reduce its effects. Although studying terrorism adds to the base of knowledge and furthers the scholarship of specific disciplines, ultimately researchers need to develop practical applications to aid counter terrorism practitioners.

To this end, the research within this thesis has significance in three ways. First, it attempts to encourage the general study of social psychology as it applies to terrorism by considering terrorism as a subset of sociological studies. This aims to apply various and multiple sociological theories to the issue of terrorism in order to attempt to understand terrorists from more than a psychological standpoint. Second, it attempts to provide additional scientific rigor to the understanding of terrorism issues by considering social psychological aspects of terrorism studies. Despite what might be apparent within the media and even parts of academic circles, terrorism is not a field of study unto itself. For those individuals who conduct research into terrorism issues, it is important they consider sociological aspects within their thinking to provide them with a broader picture of the terrorist mindset. Third, it begins to address the lack of practical applications available to understand and limit terrorism violence.

Terrorism research primarily focuses on studying the issues from the aspect of a specific discipline, be it psychology, political science, or anthropology. This approach is problematic; it is difficult to apply a single discipline to a complex problem. An individual's persona consists of the totality of what these disciplines describe, not the distinct sciences. They build on one another to make up the total character of an individual; understanding terrorists takes an integration of these disciplines. Although social psychology is not a complete multi-disciplinary approach, it does bring elements of sociology, psychology, and anthropology to bear on the problem. Defined by *The*

[36] Peter Chalk and Bruce Hoffman trace the origins of Middle Eastern terrorism to 700 years ago. See Peter Chalk and Bruce Hoffman, "The Dynamics of Suicide Terrorism: Four Case studies of Terrorism Movements," RAND Corporation, 2005, 5.

American Heritage Dictionary online social psychology is, "[t]he branch of human psychology that deals with the behavior of groups and the influence of social factors on the individual."[37] Developing an understanding of terrorist groups and their proclivity to engage in violent acts by applying theories of social psychology could ultimately predict and prevent acts of terrorism. This research has the potential of providing a method of profiling violent terrorist groups and using this information to determine the violent tendencies of other, similar organizations.

Applying Social Identity Theory provides new ways of thinking to an old problem. If a means to measure the social identity of terrorist groups is academically robust, then comparing it with the social identity of other groups could result in an understanding of the issues that drive the radicalization of individuals. As Michael Hooper states, "The concept of social identity has the potential for helping to predict and explain a variety of social behaviors."[38] The measurement of social identity using established survey instruments and a typical Likert scale is the first step in an overall larger process for developing a tool to profile terrorism organizations; the difficult part is finding an acceptable data set.

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[37] Social psychology. Dictionary.com. *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/social psychology (accessed: July 29, 2008).

[38] Michael Hooper, "The Structure and Measurement of Social Identity," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Summer 1976), Vol. 40, No. 2, 154.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

Thousands of books, articles, and essays have chronicled terrorism. In the past five to ten years the available literature has grown immensely as governments, private businesses, and the public have become more concerned about the terrorist threat. Nevertheless, with all the research conducted to date, there still lacks significant and proven practical application of Social Identity Theory and Social Distance Theory for applying to the terrorism problem.

The comprehensive study of terrorism is a relatively new discipline, beginning in the late 1960s to the early 1970s.[39] Some four decades have passed since this effort has begun, and it has only been since the attack of September 11, 2001, a short six years, in which governments, academicians, and the general public have put countering terrorism as a priority. Attacks in Beirut, Kenya, Somalia, and even the World Trade Center bombing of 1993 failed to galvanize public opinion and government resources to a significant counter terrorism posture. This lack of concern trickled down to the world of academia, preventing development of clear practical guidance for law enforcement and intelligence professionals to counter the terrorist threat.

Researchers have looked at the problem of terrorism through many different lenses: preparedness, comparative terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and governmental impact & politics. However, the one area of research that provides the possibility of a practical approach to counter terrorism is through social sciences. This includes looking at specific terrorists and their organizations in an attempt to understand and predict why terrorists behave the way they do on a psychological or sociological level. Reviewing the literature within these disciplines will help determine if practical approaches exist within the body of knowledge available today.

[39] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, (Columbia University Press: New York, 1998), 90.

B. PSYCHOLOGY[40]

Applying psychological theories is a common method of research in terrorism studies.[41] Early on, understanding the psychological aspects of terrorists appeared to be the most promising approach to predicting, and thus preventing, violent behavior by these individuals. The ability to profile people with the predisposition toward terrorist behavior, ethical and legal issues not withstanding, would be of immense benefit to those who are involved with addressing terrorism issues. To that end, numerous studies over the years have attempted to narrow down psychological characteristics of terrorist violent behavior.[42] Unfortunately, research has shown that there are few, if any, common psychological characteristics to terrorists. In Randy Borum's essay "Psychology of Terrorism," he states there are no accurate profiles or personality traits of a terrorist.[43] Numerous other pieces of research support this conclusion.[44]

Despite this view, Jerrold Post, a prominent political psychologist, has spent the last twenty years working on theories of profiling terrorists. In his prominent essay, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism," he draws on interviews of incarcerated terrorists to roughly divide them into two groups, religious fundamentalist and nationalist-separatist.[45] At its core, his argument states that hatred has been "bred to the bone" and "has been instilled in

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[40] A review of the literature on the psychology of terrorism reveals a fair amount of research on the psychological ***effects*** of terrorism, but this issue is not within the scope this thesis and therefore not covered by this literature review.

[41] See, for example, Jeff Victoroff, "The Mind of the Terrorist," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (Sage Publications: February 2005), Vol. 49, No. 1, 3-42 and Arie W. Kruglanski and Shira Fishman, "The Psychology of Terrorism: 'Syndrome' versus 'Tool' Perspectives," (New York: Routledge, July 2006), Vol. 18, No. 2, 193-215.

[42] One example, Chalk and Hoffman, "The Dynamics of Suicide Terrorism."

[43] Randy Borum, *Psychology of Terrorism* (Tampa: University of South Florida, 2004): 3.

[44] See, for example, Rex A. Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why?" (Washington D.C: Federal Research Division: Library of Congress, September 1999), Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, "Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat," New York Police Department, NYPD Intelligence Division, 2007, 6, and Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," *Annual Review of Political Science*, (2003, Volume 6), 473-507.

[45] Jerrold Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone: Psycho-cultural Foundations of Contemporary Terrorism," *Political Psychology*, (Massachusetts: International Society of Political Psychology, 2005), Vol. 26, No. 4. 615-636.

childhood" as a significant factor contributing toward the radicalization of individuals.[46] Interestingly, Post describes sociological aspects of "collective identity," but does not explicitly relate this to Social Identity Theory.[47] His essay gets tantalizing close to being able to predict terrorist behaviors with applications from Social Identity Theory,

> The survival of the group is paramount because of the sense of identity it provides. *Terrorists* whose only *sense of significance* comes from *being terrorists* cannot *be forced to give up terrorism*, for *to do* so *would be to lose their very reason for being*. To the contrary, for such individuals violent societal counterreactions reaffirm their core belief that "it's us against them and they are out to destroy us."[48]

However, Post does not quite bridge the gap between the theoretical and practical to provide counter terrorism practitioners with concrete examples on how to predict or stop terrorism. In a paper written for *Joint Forces Quarterly*, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," Post provides an agenda for military forces to take while battling terrorists.[49] Specifically, he recommends: 1) Isolating the group, 2) Insulating the public, 3) Facilitating exit from the group, and 4) Information Operations directed at the group.[50] What is noteworthy about this list is the application to group membership, which refers indirectly to aspects of Social Identity Theory. These steps definitely have the potential to provide practitioners with tools to counter the terrorism threat; unfortunately, there has not been significant application of these steps or testing of his research. Overall, Post provides significant insight into the terrorism issue; however, it appears that a majority of his psychological theories are, at a basic level, based more on sociological or social psychological ideas.

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[46] Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone," 616.

[47] Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone," 629.

[48] Post, "When Hatred is Bred in the Bone," 633.

[49] Jerrold Post, "Psychological Operations and Counterterrorism," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, (National Defense University, Second Quarter, 2005), Issue 37, 105-111.

[50] Post, "Psychological Operations," 107-109.

Many studies have dispelled the myth that terrorists are psychopathic. Clark McCauley writes, "Thirty years ago this suggestion [that terrorists are psychopathic] was taken very seriously, but thirty years of research has found psychopathology and personality disorder no more likely among terrorists than among non-terrorists from the same background."[51] This is important to the overall discussion for several reasons, if terrorists do suffer from a mental condition and considered irrational, then there would be little hope in attempting to understand their behavior. Another common misconception is that terrorists are poor and from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but research has shown terrorists come from all economic levels, varying levels of education and criminal behavior, and represent different age groups. A recent report by the NYPD Intelligence Division also supports this notion.[52]

It is important to note the application of political psychology to the discussion of terrorism. Political psychology, defined as "fostering a productive relationship between psychological inquiry and social practice, between psychological processes and social action," provides the application of possible psychological motives to the political aspect of terrorism.[53] As a relatively new discipline, there is not a considerable amount of work on the specific topic of terrorism within political psychology. However, if taking a broader view, there has been applicable research in the area of leadership and organizational dynamics. Post has written on narcissistic personalities and their impact on political leadership (see "Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychological Profile" and "Narcissism and the Charismatic Leader-Follower Relationship") which could provide some application to understanding the leadership of terrorist organizations, but are mainly concerned with individual psychology.[54] Another example is Diamond &

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[51] Clark McCauley, "Psychological issues in understanding terrorism and the response to terrorism," in *The Psychology of Terrorism,* ed. Christopher Stout (Pennsylvania: Greenwood Publishing, nd – but circa 2001), 4.

[52] Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, "Radicalization in the West," 8.

[53] Adela Garzon Perez, "Political Psychology as Discipline and Resource,**"** *Political Psychology,* (Syracuse, Ny.: International Association of Political Psychologists, June 2001), Vol. 22, No. 2, 347.

[54] Jerrold Post, "Saddam Hussein of Iraq: A Political Psychological Profile," *Political Psychology,* (Syracuse, Ny.: International Association of Political Psychologists, June 1991), Vol. 12, No. 2, 279-289 and Jerrold Post, "Narcissism and the Charismatic Leader-Follower Relationship," *Political Psychology,* (Syracuse, Ny.: International Association of Political Psychologists, March 1993), Vol. 14, No. 3, 99-121.

Allcorn, "Role Formation as Defensive Activity in Bureaucratic Organizations" which provides some insight into how individuals develop into specific roles within organizations.[55] This new discipline does provide the possibility of analyzing terrorist organizations from a leadership perspective, which could provide some avenues to disrupting their operations, but has not provided significant contributions within this discipline.

C. SOCIOLOGY

One way to study the sociological aspects of terrorist groups is comparing the different organizations against each other to determine commonalities. This provides analysis generating additional information useful to the understanding of terrorist groups; "comparative terrorism" was particularly popular when analyzing left-wing terrorist groups of the 1960s-1970s.[56] This type of research was necessary and beneficial when attempting to understand the nature and culture of terrorist groups back when research regarding the topic was just beginning; however, this approach is less common today, probably due to the additional body of knowledge within sociology and social psychology currently applied in this area. However, more than just comparing groups, sociology could potentially offer theories and models that provide practical guidance to help disrupt terrorist organizations. The problem, like most of terrorism studies, is the lack of research. According to Roberta Seneschal De La Roche, "… the ranks of sociologists whose major mission was to explain terrorism had been painfully thin."[57]

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the University of Maryland provides excellent tools for conducting comparisons of various groups and the

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[55] Michael A. Diamond and Seth Allcorn, "Role Formation as Defensive Activity in Bureaucratic Organizations," *Political Psychology*, (International Association of Political Psychologists: Syracuse, Ny., December 1986), Vol. 7, No. 4, 709-732.

[56] David Rapport, "Modern Terror: History and Special Features," in *Politics of Terrorism: A Survey*, ed. Andrew T H Tan, (Routledge: New York, January 2006), 8.

[57] Roberta Seneschal De La Roche, "Toward a Scientific Theory of Terrorism," *Sociological Theory*, (American Sociological Association: Washington D.C., March 2004), 1.

specifics of their attacks.[58] START provides an on-line database that provides information on over 80,000 different terrorist attacks, allowing users to compare various aspects of terrorist attacks including date, attack type, weapon type, and casualties.[59]

The studies conducted to date have not yet matured enough to provide strong classes or categories of sociological terrorism research. Instead, it is a "hodgepodge" of ideas beginning to take hold as we look at terrorist organizations as networks, specifically applying Social Network Analysis, or looking at socio-economic/socio-cultural environments to understand organizational behavior of terrorists, or even group dynamics.

Social Network Analysis looks to analyze the structure and interactions between individuals of a group in an attempt to understand how the group operates. According to an article by Steve Russler, "The value of social network theory versus other political science and sociological approaches is its focus on the value of the network structure rather than the characteristics of the individual."[60] Basing the structure on individuals as "nodes" within a network possibly provides an understanding of the organization by diagramming the network. There are even commercially available software programs available to help conduct the analysis.[61]

Another approach to understanding group behaviors within sociology is Social Identity Theory. Social Identity Theory came about initially as the result of research conducted by Henri Tajfel into group dynamics.[62] As described in Chapter II, Section A, Social Identity Theory asserts that individuals gain some benefit (or perceive some benefit) from membership in a group. Because of organizational structures terrorist

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[58] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, website, http://www.start.umd.edu, (accessed on July 12, 2008).

[59] University of Maryland website, "Global Terrorism Database," http://www.start.umd.edu/data/gtd/ , (accessed on July 12, 2008). Note that this website is currently developing an updated version that will allow comparisons on several other factors including terrorist group and target type.

[60] Steve Russler, "Social Network Analysis as an Approach to Combat Terrorism: Past, Present, and Future Research," *Homeland Security Affairs Journal*, (Monterey, Ca.: Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security, July 2006), http://www.hsaj.org/?fullarticle=2.2.8, (accessed on September 21, 2007).

[61] Orgnet.com, http://www.orgnet.com/index.html, (accessed on September 21, 2007).

[62] Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, x.

organization have, along with the ability to "draw" people into a posture of radicalization, applying this theory to the study of terrorism could yield important knowledge applicable to the academic discussion. However, as a theory that is just starting to gain some traction (most significant research in this area began in the 1980s), there is yet to be seen significant application of Social Identity Theory to the understanding of terrorists with respect to group behavior. One paper in *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, by Brannan, Esler, and Strindberg, does begin to discuss the practicality applying Social Identity Theory to the problem of terrorism[63]. They begin to apply some specifics to addressing the terrorism issue:

> Social identity theory itself is developing a sophisticated battery of ideas for resolving inter-group conflict. Three prominent areas (among many) are *crossed categorizations* (using one social category to cancel out another), *recategorization* (bringing members of two categories together under an inclusive, superordinate one), and *decategorization* (dissolving the problematic categories altogether, especially by facilitating contact between members of rival groups).[64]

Unfortunately, they do not provide the predictive tools necessary for counter terrorism professionals.

Social Movement Theory, originated in the early 1900s, is another sociological model looking at how groups form and what drives individuals to join specific organizations. It states, "[s]tructural strains or constraints produced enough psychological discomfort (sense of isolation and impotence) to then produce collective action (which provided empowerment, belonging, and a sense of control)."[65] At its most basic level, Social Movement Theory asserts that individuals will seek mass mobilizations based on the development of some stress, most often lack of economic resources. There are some problems with this model in that research shows there is really no significant correlation between economic deprivation and radicalization of

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[63] Brannan et al, "Talking with Terrorists."

[64] Brannan et al, "Talking with Terrorists," 19.

[65] Maj. Jennifer Chandler, "The Explanatory Value of Social Movement Theory," *Strategic Insights* (Monterey, Ca.: Naval Post Graduate School, Center for Contemporary Conflict, May 2005), Vol. IV, Issue 5, http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2005/May/chandlerMay05.asp, (accessed on August 26, 2008).

individuals.[66] Despite this, there are several papers published within the last three years laying the groundwork for understanding Islamism within the context of Social Movement Theory; however, they fall short of providing applications to the terrorist problem and will require further work to develop more fully.[67]

As stated in Chapter II, Section E, Social Distance Theory seeks to relate individuals and groups to each other based on their "distance" culturally, linguistically, and ethnically. Numerous studies have used Social Distance Theory and the Bogardus scale to measure social distance between racial groups, social classes, and "blue collar" vs. "white collar" workers.[68] Over the past fifty years, Social Distance Theory has incorporated the Bogardus scale[69]. This is unfortunate because there are other, more robust, applications this theory could provide if taken out of the context of the Bogardus scale. Other applications of Social Distance Theory are explored further in later sections of this thesis.

Expanding on this line of thought is the idea of Social Geometry, as described by Donald Black. Black illustrates Social Distance Theory by stating that in order for terrorism to occur, social distance must be great, but actual physical distance must be close.[70] Black goes on to assert that some of this has changed in the modern era with the advent of technology, e-mail, and other electronic communication making physical distance obsolete. The implication here is that since physical distance is no longer an issue, social distance takes on a more important role in understanding group conflict.

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[66] Mitchell D. Silber and Arvin Bhatt, "Radicalization in the West," 8.

[67] See, for example, Asef Bayat, "Islamism and Social Movement Theory," *Third World Quarterly*, (Routledge: New York, January 2005), Vol. 26, No. 6, 891-908, http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu (accessed August 26, 2008) and Roel Meijer "Taking the Islamist Movement Seriously: Social Movement Theory and the Islamist Movement," *International Review of Social History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, August 1, 2005), Vol. 50, 279-291, http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ (accessed August 26, 2008).

[68] See, for example, Frank R. Westie and Margaret L. Westie, "The Social-Distance Pyramid: Relationships Between Caste and Class," *The American Journal of Sociology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: September 1957), Vol. 63, No. 2, 190-196, and Edward O. Laumann, "Subjective Social Distance and Urban Occupational Stratification," *The American Journal of Sociology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, July 1965), Vol. 71, No. 1, 26-36.

[69] Described in more detail in Chapter II of this thesis.

[70] Black, "The Geometry of Terrorism," 21.

This application could provide some practical tools for counter terrorism practitioners; unfortunately, little work has built upon Black's theories of how physical distance vs. social distance relate to the terrorism issue.

Few studies begin to develop methodologies for actually measuring the social identity of groups. In 1976, Michael Hooper wrote an essay in *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, "The Structure and Measurement of Social Identity." Throughout the article, he describes a general, high-level process for developing a standardized measurement instrument for social identity.[71] Hooper expands on this concept in a later paper, "*A Multivariate Approach to the Measurement and Analysis of Social Identity."*[72] Using 146 students, from a variety of racial backgrounds as his data set, Hooper demonstrates the effectiveness of the qualitative and quantitative approaches to Social Identity Theory proven particularly well through a variety of statistical methods.[73] Because of the empirical processes detailed in his paper, it is a good starting point for developing social identity measurements. Hooper concludes his essay with an invitation to use his theories for other applications measuring the social identity of other groups.

One study which does attempt to apply a practical application to the measurement of social identity is *"Duty, Honor, Country: The Social Identity of West Point Cadets"* by Volker C. Franke.[74] In the Winter 2000 issue of *Armed Forces & Society*, Franke published a study on the social identities of West Point cadets.[75] He developed a hypothesis stating that warriorism, patriotism, globalization, and career commitment should increase over cadet class years and individuals who more closely identify with a militaristic identity should have higher "warrioristic" and patriotic tendencies. In all cases, to a greater or lesser extent, Franke was able to prove his hypothesis correct. Some aspects showed that while military identity does increase while at West Point, it does not

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[71] Hooper, "The Structure and Measurement…"

[72] Michael Hooper, "A Multivariate Approach to the Measurement and Analysis of Social Identity," *Psychological Reports*, (Missoula, Mt.: Ammons Scientific Ltd., August 1985), Vol. 57, 315-325.

[73] Hooper, "The Structure and Measurement…" 156-164.

[74] Volker C. Franke, "Duty, Honor, Country: The Social Identity of West Point Cadets," *Armed Forces & Society*, (Thousand Oaks CA.: Sage Publications, Winter 2000), Vol. 26, No. 2, 175-202.

[75] Franke "Duty, Honor, Country."

replace salient identities such as those associated with family and church. Using the cadet population, Franke was able to provide insight into the social identities as they relate to warriorism, patriotism, globalization, and career commitment. This essay provides a good example of the practical applications of the measurement of social identity.

The ideas of social network theory, social identity theory, and social distance are the theories providing the most in terms of practical application for counter terrorism practitioners. These types of models have a strong possibility of seeding the development of tools for the understanding of terrorist behavior. They have the potential for providing specific steps necessary to disrupt terrorist organizations, but they are still firmly rooted in academia.

D. ANALYSIS

At this point we can begin to pick out some generally accepted practical information from this literature review: Terrorists are not psychopaths, building specific profiles of terrorists is difficult, if not impossible, and sociological disciplines are ripe for application to the terrorism threat. Scholars have yet to apply social sciences systematically to terrorist studies to provide consistent answers to a variety of questions posed by practitioners…What drives individuals to become terrorists? What drives individuals to join one terrorist organization over another? How can we use this information to prevent violent acts? Using the existing body of knowledge from the social sciences to answer these questions and develop or adapt models to predict violent terrorist behavior would be the significant development for counter terrorism officials in modern times.

VI. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter V, the literature review, Michael Hooper's essay on the measurement of social identity serves as a guide to developing a survey instrument for the measurement of the social identity of terrorists.[76] The first step in this process is to narrow the terrorist group sufficiently to ensure enough of an in-group, with similar social identities, to make the measurement applicable. Terrorists vary around the world just as individuals do. The sociological differences between a white supremacy group within the United States such as The Arm, Sword, and Covenant of the Lord, and a separatist's movement like the Tamil Tigers (LTTE), are so drastically different that any conclusions gathered from a combination of data from these two groups would be hard to defend. For the measurement of social identity to be applicable to a terrorist group, there must be some commonalities between the individuals within the measured group.

At first glance, this approach might seem counter intuitive. If the research limits the scope of the group so closely, it would seem any discussion about their social identity would be moot because they would all be the same. However, the goal of the research within this paper is exactly to that point. The data will represent the in-group's social identity so that accurate comparisons with other organizations can be meaningful. It is for future research to consider the possibility of discussing the social identity of all terrorists as a whole instead of limiting it to certain groups.

The second issue in the development of a survey instrument for the measurement of social identity is to decide on whether to use either qualitative or quantitative questions in the survey instrument. The study of the social identity of groups in the past has used

[76] Hooper, "The Structure and Measurement…"

both quantitative methods, that used aggregate scores from survey instruments with scaled responses, and qualitative surveys that used more single word answers, for developing their conclusions.

For the quantitative approach, some form of the Likert Scale is used to ask respondents questions similar to "My group works for the benefit of <city, state, or country>" or "I consider <trait or emotion> as important for members of my group" on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree."[77] The Likert scale has been in use since 1932 and has been a common method for conducting a variety of surveys.[78] The number of respondents can vary from as few as a dozen to upwards of thousands depending on the nature of the study.[79] After collating the answers, various types of information gleaned from the aggregate scores relates to the issues raised in the survey instrument. The most important part of this type of research as it pertains to Social Identity Theory is the development of the questions within the survey instrument. There needs to be significant consideration to the construction of the questions in order to fully identify and specify the components of social identity under study.

Qualitative inquiries usually take the form of open-ended questions that providing blanks for individuals to fill in the answers for questions similar to "I associate my identity with _____."[80] The description of the social identity of the respondents results from reviewing, coding, and dividing the completed survey instruments.

B. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

To test the hypothesis stated within this thesis and develop a survey instrument to measure social identity of terrorist organizations, it is necessary to build questions around

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[77] As an example of this type of research, see Frank, "Duty, Honor, Country."

[78] I Elaine Allen and Christopher A. Seaman, "Likert Scales and Data Analyses," *Quality Progress* (Milwaukee, Mt.: American Society for Quality, July 1, 2007), Vol. 40, No. 47, 64. http://www.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ (accessed September 13, 2008).

[79] For further information on this topic see U.S. General Accounting Office, "Using Statistical Sampling," GAO/PEMD-10.1.6, (Washington D.C.: May 1992) and U.S. General Accounting Office, "Developing and Using Questionnaires," PEMD-10.1.7, (Washington D.C.: October 1993).

[80] As an example of a qualitative study of social identity, see Gillian Oaker and Rubert Brown, "Intergroup relations in a Hospital Setting: A Further Test of Social Identity Theory," *Human Relations*, (Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications, August 1986), Vol. 39, No. 8, 767-778.

specific topics. Many factors can influence the specific topics chosen and the following weighed heavily into the selection of questions for this study:

- Applicability to Social Identity Theory – If we are trying to measure social identity, any questions asked need to be within the context of some group. It does not help to measure the social identity of an individual if questions revolve around individual psychological components such as looking for pathology within terrorists or factors to which individuals have no control, such as gender or age.

- Availability of data – At some point, the data needs to be available to answer the questions. Since this study uses open source interviews (discussed in the Section B of this chapter), which provide no ability for follow-up or clarification of answers, the data available restricts certain aspects of the study such as questions regarding globalization, cultural influences other than religion, and motivations.

- Complexity of study – It would be beneficial to ask hundreds of questions, regarding dozens and dozens of topics, but data availability severally restricts this. Additionally, since this thesis begins the research on the measurement of terrorist social identity, it seems prudent to limit the topics to concentrate on to a manageable level to be able to better interpret the results and determine the viability of this research model.

Based on the factors above, the questions within the survey instrument for the research described in this thesis were adapted from Franke's essay, "Duty, Honor, Country."[81] As discussed in Chapter V, Franke's research developed a measurement for the social identity of West Point cadets, specifically their attitudes and feelings as they relate to warriorism, patriotism, globalization, and career commitment.[82] The similarities of the attitudes among West Point cadets and those of Middle Eastern, ethno-nationalist inspired terrorists are considerable. Both groups have strong attitudes and feelings of patriotism (loyalty in terrorist groups), warriorism (a willingness to fight for a cause or a propensity to violence), career commitment (dedication to a cause), and globalization (for terrorists, the "dilution" of pure Islam by Western influences.) Because of these

[81] Franke, "Duty, Honor, Country," 186.

[82] Although important for the overall research within the context of Social Identity Theory, the hypotheses Franke set out to prove are not as critical to the discussion of measuring the social identity of terrorist organizations.

similarities, it is possible to apply the survey instrument developed by Franke for use with terrorists without significant modification. Questions were adapted almost word for word from Franke's original survey instrument, except for replacing the descriptions of "American" or "United States" with "group" or "my organization."[83] The survey instrument for this study did not use Franke's questions regarding globalization in order to focus more on militant and organizational loyalty perspectives. Finally, because of the importance of religion and religious attitudes to this type of terrorism and Middle Eastern issues, it was necessary to add some questions regarding religion to the survey instrument.

Additional analysis of the questions developed for this research thesis also shows the relationship to issues surrounding culture. As discussed in Chapter II, Section B, culture is an important aspect of social identity. Parsing out culture into some of its components provides a context as to why the questions asked are relevant. For the survey instrument within the research covered by this thesis:

- Religion - Since religion is a dominating factor for sociological, cultural, and political activities in the Middle East, it is an important feature within the survey instrument. Additionally, it serves as a distinct contrast to the majority of the Western world (predominately Christian) which could serve future research in this area. Religion is definitely a component of culture, especially within the Middle East.

- Self Worth - Self worth can have a broad definition. For this study, it is the general concept of self-confidence, a feeling of contributing to society or a cause, and the rationalization of the sacrifice needed to undertake a clandestine lifestyle in order to participate in a network for a specific cause or issue.

- Peers/community - Since Social Identity Theory is mainly concerned with group processes and interactions as they apply to an individual, it is important to incorporate the peers and communities as they influence terrorists. If we are looking at what factors are associated with the social identity of an individual, we must look at the society (or group) that they interact.

[83] For a breakdown of the questions in the actual survey instrument, see Table 1.

- Loyalty - Loyalty is important considering the sacrifices individuals make to belong to a clandestine organization. It plays a strong role in all aspects of the recruitment, indoctrination, training, and operating cycle of any terrorist. Measuring the loyalty is analogous to measuring the patriotism of an individual in a Western civilization.

C. DATA SET

As mentioned above, it is important to find a "cohesive" group of similar terrorists in order to conduct a viable study of the measurement of social identity.[84] Due to the clandestine nature of terrorist organizations, finding a group of terrorists to conduct systematic comparative interviews or subject to a formal survey instruments is difficult, as they usually do not make themselves available for sociological studies. This has been one of the major problems of terrorism research over the past fifty plus years. As a result, this study used a unique data set instead of the traditional method of locating and physically surveying a group. This research used open source interviews of known or stated terrorists taken from newspapers, magazines, on-line journals, and on-line articles conducted by journalists and scholars as respondents to survey questions. These interviews, after compiling, reviewing, and coding for pertinent information relevant to the subjects, served to develop their social identity profiles.

Before moving on to the detailed discussion of the data set or analysis, it is important to address the possibility a terrorist will "say what the press wants to hear" during an interview. However, as stated in Bonnie Cordes paper "When terrorists do the talking: Reflections on terrorist literature,"

> By using the primary materials provided by the terrorists themselves, such as memoirs, statements, interviews, and communiqués much information about the terrorist mindset and decisionmaking [sic] process can be gleaned…Though they use violent action to send messages of fear and intimidation, terrorists must also use written and spoken language to legitimize, rationalize, and justify those actions.[85]

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[84] Restricting the data set to a "cohesive group" for research is a common practice, see, for example: Bonnie Cordes, "When Terrorists do the Talking: Reflections on Terrorist Literature," RAND Corporation, August 1987 Franke "Duty, Honor, Country," and Oaker and Brown, "Intergroup Relations in a Hospital Setting."

[85] Cordes, "When Terrorists do the Talking," 1.

Cordes defines two types of communication within the context of terrorism literature, interviews, and speeches: How they persuade others – the propaganda aspect, and how they persuade themselves or their group – the auto-propaganda aspect.[86] The interviews used for the data set within this thesis fall partially within both types of communications. Terrorist leaders give interviews to provide context for their actions, for if they did not, the target society would not know what desired change sought by the terrorist organization. This falls within the propaganda portion of communication. The auto-propaganda aspect provides an avenue for terrorists to recruit additional members by providing evidence of the "glorification" of the martyr, displaying faith in the religion, and reminding others of the rewards of martyrdom. Neither of these communication descriptions is indicative of "telling the press what they want to hear." Both forms of communication serve a purpose for the terrorist organization and therefore useful as appropriate responses used for the survey instrument described by this thesis.

1. Coding Details

Coding consisted of independently reviewing each individual interview separately. The basic idea is to use the interviews as the "answers" to the questions on the survey instrument. This would be similar to each individual filling out a single survey instrument.

To accurately "answer" the questions in the survey instrument, this thesis used content analysis of the interviews based on guidelines provided from the General Accountability Office (GAO) report "Content Analysis: A Methodology for Analyzing the Written Word." It provided an opportunity to develop and analyze responses that would not have been accessible by traditional survey methods due to the clandestine nature of terrorist organizations. The GAO report lists seven steps for conducting a content analysis; below is a list of those steps with descriptions of how they apply within to the research conducted for this thesis:[87]

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[86] Cordes, "When Terrorists do the Talking," 4.

[87] U.S. General Accounting Office, "Content Analysis: A Methodology for Structuring and Analyzing the Written Material," GAO/PEMD-10.1.3, (Washington D.C.: September 1996), 13.

1) Deciding whether to use content analysis – Content analysis was the only viable method for obtaining the responses to the survey instrument given the clandestine nature of terrorist organization, other methods such as direct survey, Delphi method, or even using various case studies were not available.

2) Defining the variables – In this context, a variable is something within the interview that changes so that it is possible to interpret or measure the change. The variables within the survey instrument for this study specifically addressed references to loyalty, group membership, and warriorism.

3) Selecting the material for analysis – Interviews were taken from a variety of "on-line" articles from U.S. and foreign sources including on-line news magazines, on-line newspapers, and on-line journals. On-line sources were preferred due to the wide availability, timeliness, and lack of interviews available in print sources.

4) Defining the recording units – Content analysis can be conducted using words, phrases, or even sentences as the unit of measure. This research used full responses to a single question, which, on average, consisted of approximately three sentences per response.

5) Developing an analysis plan – Because the questions asked within the survey instrument were on a Likert scale, they can be considered ordinal categories, which, according to the GAO report, allows for the use of "Intensity" as a method of analysis. This allows the "scaling" of the responses as they relate to how strongly the respondents answered the questions in the interviews. Word frequency was not appropriate for coding due to the recording unit of full responses or small paragraphs.

6) Coding the textual material – Coding was conducted manually by the author of this thesis. After studying each interview, responses to interview questions provided insight into how an individual would have answered a given question on the survey instrument.

7) Analyzing the data – Analyzing the data entailed collating the responses from the survey instrument and applying the necessary statistics to arrive at the results.

2. Control Group

The control group for the comparisons within this study uses the Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya, (the Arabic acronym being HAMAS), otherwise known as "the Islamic Resistance Movement."[88] For background information, HAMAS is a terrorist organization, established in late 1987, which uses both violence and political means to work toward and establish an independent Palestinian state in place of Israel.[89] HAMAS conducts both violent attacks, notably the extensive use of suicide bombers, as well as financing social programs such as schools, sports, and healthcare clinics, in an effort to garner support from the local Palestinian population. As an outgrowth of the organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, they are concerned with the creation of an Islamic state while ensuring the destruction of Israel. Most governments classify HAMAS as an Islamic fundamentalist group.

The number of available interviews from HAMAS consisted of 14 unique individuals who discussed with journalists or scholars their political, religious, and personal situations and/or goals for the organization. These 14 interviews included 9 individuals considered "political leaders," 3 suicide bombers (2 who were preparing for a mission and 1 who had been caught), 1 "spokesman," and 1 "religious leader."

3. Comparison Group

In order to test Hypothesis III stated in Chapter III, it was necessary to evaluate a second group for a comparison to the control group. Based on all the factors listed above for the control group, as well as data availability, interviews reviewed from the "official" website of declared members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) were coded using the same methodology as listed for the control group.[90] The PFLP

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[88] HAMAS is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State. See, http://www.state.gov/s/ct/enemy/index.htm#enemy (accessed on September 24, 2008).

[89] Information regarding HAMAS taken from untitled paper describing designated Foreign Terrorists Organizations. Available through the U.S. Department of State website, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/45323.pdf, (accessed on September 25, 2008).

[90] "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," "Articles and Interviews," http://www.pflp.ps/english/?q=taxonomy/term/15, (accessed on September 14, 2008).

provides an excellent comparison data set because they are a known terrorist organization, with a consistent history of violence, but currently have a much lower tempo of terrorist operations.[91] In addition, no one from the control group stated either overtly or through implication that they were associated with the PFLP.

The PFLP is an organization under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The PFLP seeks to use political, economic, social, and armed methods in order "to topple conservative Arab states, destroy Israel, and apply Marxist doctrine to the Palestinian struggle."[92] It is a secular organization with more of an emphasis of social equality mixed with removing Western and Israeli influences from the Middle East. The PFLP was very prominent in the 1970s and early 1980s, conducting numerous aviation hijackings and carried out several other acts of violence.[93] Since the fall of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, the PFLP's influence and activities have declined representing a shift, and rethinking, of their Marxist doctrine.[94]

The interviews of the PFLP consisted of 10 unique individual who discussed their political, religious, and personal situations with journalists or scholars. They represented 8 individuals who either were or currently are serving in a top tier leadership position, 1 individual who was a "foot solider" of the organization, and 1 individual who represented the Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the self-declared military wing of the PFLP.

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[91] The PFLP is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State. See, http://www.state.gov/s/ct/enemy/index.htm#enemy (accessed on September 24, 2008).

[92] GlobalSecurity.org, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/pflp.htm, (accessed on August 22, 2008).

[93] BBC News, "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," January 26, 2008, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/pflp.htm, (accessed on August 22, 2008).

[94] Julien Versteegh, "Interview with Ahmad Sa'adat in Jericho Prison – February 2006," Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine website, March 15, 2006. http://www.pflp.ps/english/?q=interview-ahmad-saadat-jericho-prison-february-200, (accessed on August 22, 2008).

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VII. DATA ANALYSIS

A. CODING THE CONTROL GROUP

After reviewing all interviews from the control data set, fourteen distinct individuals were available for analysis. Considering that an "Intensity" content analysis plan served as a basis for the analysis, if a subject directly addressed one of the questions posed by the interviewer, a response value of "5" or "Strongly Agree" was recorded on the survey instrument. For example, concerning the question "I look upon the group as a 'calling' where I can serve my country," one subject stated,

> We made an oath on the Koran, in the presence of Allah — a pledge not to waver. This jihad pledge is called *bayt al-ridwan*, after the garden in Paradise that is reserved for the prophets and the martyrs. I know that there are other ways to do jihad. But this one is sweet — the sweetest.[95]

The interpretation of this statement led to equate statements such as "an oath" or "a pledge" with a "calling." Further analyzing the statement, the definition from *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* for a calling is "[to] summon to the discharge of a particular duty; to designate for an office, or employment, especially of a religious character" which accurately depicts how the HAMAS suicide bomber interviewed responded to questions of this nature.[96] As another example, as the same quote above states, references to the "Koran," "Allah," "jihad," and "prophets" within just this one answer in the interview led to scoring "Strongly Agree" to the question regarding religion. Responses to interview questions that did not include as high "intensity" in choices of words and were not as direct but still described feelings above "Neutral" scored a value of "4" or "Agree." These examples of interpretations applied to all questions throughout the survey.

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95 Nasara Hassan, "Are you ready? Tomorrow you will be in Paradise…" TimesOnLine, (July 14, 2005), http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/article543551.ece, (accessed on July 27, 2008).

96 calling. Dictionary.com. *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*. MICRA, Inc. http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/calling (accessed: August 15, 2008).

B. CODING THE COMPARISON GROUP

For the comparison group, again considering that the "Intensity" content analysis plan was used, evaluations of answers to questions was the same as the control group. For example, in regards to the question "I am planning to serve the group until retirement," in an interview with Abu Ahmed Fuad, the statement:

> Our people contain a huge strength and a spirit of resistance and a readiness to sacrifice in order to achieve the entire Palestinian national objective. There will be no force capable of making the Palestinian people bow, or force people to give up their rights, and we in the PFLP will continue the resistance in all of its forms, in the forefront, armed struggle, until we achieve our right to return, and the establishment of Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, on the road to our strategic goal, the full liberation of our national soil - Palestine. [97]

The "Intensity" of this statement came from such phrases as "bow," "force to give up rights," "until we achieve our right to return." This represented an answer of "Agree" or a value of "4." In this particular context, a value of "Strongly Agree" was not appropriate because of the distinct lack of phrases that would represent supporting the PFLP "forever," "without hesitation," until the "end of time." Of significant note was the lack of any type of religious statements, religious propaganda, or infusion of religious rhetoric in any of the interviews coded for the comparison group, the PFLP.

C. FINAL ANALYSIS

After coding all the interviews and applying the answers to the individual survey instruments, the mean and median values for social identity in response to each question were calculated. Table 1 below represents the results of the survey.

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[97] PFLP website, "Interview with comrade leader Abu Ahmed Fuad with daily al-Quds newspaper," January 21, 2008, http://www.pflp.ps/english/?q=interview-comrade-leader-abu-ahmad-fuad-daily-al-q, (accessed on August 21, 2008).

Survey Question	Average Social Identity Value for HAMAS	Mean Identity Value for HAMAS	Average Social Identity Value for PFLP	Mean Identity Value for PFLP	Differences Between Averages	Difference Between Means
I look upon the group as a "calling" where I can serve my country.	4.36	4.50	3.80	4.0	.56	.5
When I decided to pursue a military career, I expected to fight in a war.	4.14	4.0	4.00	4.0	.14	0
I have a strong commitment to a military career.	4.57	5.0	4.10	4.0	.57	1
I am planning to serve the group until retirement.	4.57	5.0	4.10	4.0	.47	1
In retrospect, I am proud of my decision to join my group.	4.29	5.0	4.20	4.0	.09	1
I strongly associate with my religious group.	3.77	4.05	3.10	3.0	.67	1

Table 1. Social Identity Values for Control Group and Comparison Group.

The results show social identity scores for HAMAS, the control group, ranging from 3.77 to 4.57. On the Likert scale, this roughly corresponds to between salient and extremely salient with their individual identities associated with the factors investigated. Looking at these results at a general level, this makes sense; one would expect individuals from HAMAS to lean toward "Strongly Agree" with respect to warriorism, group loyalty, and religion based on their activities and stated charter. HAMAS has been more violent over the recent years (see below for details), tends to be more religious, and is significantly involved in the community, firming up their political base. In contrast, the comparison group, the PFLP, had values ranging from 3.10 to 4.20, which roughly correspond to "Agree," a much lesser salient identity with respect to the same measures

above than HAMAS. The PFLP, with a more secular and political charter, has less emphasis on "warrioristic" attitudes and violent action.

Analyzing each question individually:

"A calling where I can serve my country" – Average value for HAMAS 4.36, for PFLP - 3.80. The difference between these scores, .57, represents a more emotional commitment by HAMAS to fighting for their cause than the PFLP. Several reasons could have an impact on this element including the established political nature of the PFLP over a more violent revolutionary struggle than HAMAS. Additionally, HAMAS is a much younger organization than the PFLP, which could have an influence on individuals seeing their organization as more radical or prone to action based on a less established organizational structure and more of a sense of urgency. Recent developments where HAMAS has taken more of a formal political role could have an impact in the future on HAMAS social identity with respect to this component, but it will require time for these attitudes to become realized (if at all) and for them to be apparent in interviews.[98]

"I expected to fight in a war" – Average value HAMAS - 4.14, for PFLP 4.0. These values are close, differing by only .14, which is expected. Every definition of terrorism includes some sort of violence or disruption with the intent to coerce political will. Since HAMAS and the PFLP both "fight" for an independent Palestinian state, their feelings regarding this issue should be similar. What is surprising is that the values are lower than expected for this element. Casual observation would predict a higher acceptance of violent action by members of these organizations. One possible reason for this could be the long-standing political nature of the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, being in place for over fifty years. Additionally, there are individuals within HAMAS and the PFLP who do wish to work toward a peaceful resolution, individuals who consider other ways to support a violent revolution without actually participating in that violence. As stated in the background information regarding the PFLP, their organization understands that it will require more than just violence, but political and social involvement as well.

[98] For background on recent political developments with HAMAS see, http://www.cfr.org/publication/8968/, (accessed on September 25, 2008).

Although not as clear in their charter, HAMAS has similar statements about political and social involvement, providing further evidence of the similarities of this component of the two groups.

"A strong commitment to a military career" – Average value for HAMAS 4.57, for PFLP, 4.00. As mentioned earlier, the PFLP is a more established, political leaning organization, particularly in the past ten years. Their sense of warriorism, although still present, is not as high as the militancy of members of HAMAS. Over the past twenty years, the PFLP has worked largely within political avenues instead of violent ones to address the issues important to them; the .57 difference reflects the political emphasis and lack of recent violent activities. Some PFLP interviews reflected more concern with supporting the cause through political or social means and, although not outright critical of violent action, described more peaceful and diplomatic solutions. Committing oneself to a military career would mean being more open to violence and armed struggle. HAMAS is more likely to use a "call to action" and violent protest than the PFLP.

"Planning to serve the group until retirement" – Average value for HAMAS - 4.57, for PFLP – 4.10. This value was unexpected for the PFLP. Considering the PFLP has been active since the late 1960s, there seems they would have a long history of supporting the organization until retirement or death. One possible explanation for this outcome is the more political nature of the PFLP, an example of which includes popular elections for the Secretary General of the organization. This creates less of a sense of long-term dedication to the group. This would have an impact on their overall social identity for loyalty. HAMAS, again being a "younger" organization and more fundamental, is probably more likely to have strong views toward dedication to the organization. Additionally, since HAMAS is more violent, it requires a more clandestine organizational structure, which in turn creates more salient group loyalty.

"Proud of my decision to join my group" – Average value for HAMAS - 4.29, for PFLP – 4.20. The values for this element differed between the groups in only .09, meaning the feelings of HAMAS and the PFLP are almost identical. One interpretation of this common element between these two groups is the close, almost identical, issue both groups struggle for; a withdrawal of Israel from disputed Palestinian territory. Both

HAMAS and the PFLP strongly believe in a return of Palestinians to "occupied" lands. Since both groups are working toward a similar goal, it would make sense they would feel similarly toward being part of an organization working for that goal. Overall, the interviews of the PFLP members did not provide as "Intense" answers stating their commitment and perceived or real benefit for joining or belonging to the PFLP. Anyone who participates in a clandestine organization such as a terrorist group would have some sense of pride or commitment, if only to work toward keeping the clandestine operations secret; however, the commitment varies based on the possible perceived or real benefits for joining that organization.

"Strongly associate with my religious group" – Average value for HAMAS – 3.77, for PFLP – 3.10. The value for the PFLP was expected. The PFLP, being a self-proclaimed secular organization, aligned with a "Neutral" identity toward religion. This is important to note for several reasons. First, the PFLP is a secular organization, but for the most part, its individuals are individuals involved with religion, especially considering their Middle Eastern culture. The neutral attitude toward religion demonstrates their *group* social identity, despite the probability of it being somewhat important to them on an individual basis based on culture alone. HAMAS, a more religious organization, expends considerable financial and emotional support to political factors involved with their perceived struggle in the liberation of Palestine. HAMAS political efforts reduced the influence of religion on their overall social identity to a little below "Agree" on the Likert scale. This is lower than expected, but most likely reflects the political influences on HAMAS organizational structure.

Considering Social Distance Theory within the context of this analysis, the overall social identities of the two groups analyzed, the PFLP and HAMAS do not show significant differences in the various aspects of their social identities. The total average distance between the two groups with regard to warriorism, loyalty, and religion is .42. The largest difference, religious attitudes, is still not that significantly large as to warrant violence between these two groups. Further corroborating this is the lack of available accounts of targeted violence of these groups against each other.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The discussion and analysis above is a significant step forward in the practical application of Social Identity Theory. The social profile of these two groups is possible to articulate numerically and useful for further comparison. Overall, the social identity of HAMAS, with respect to warriorism, loyalty, and religion tends to be more salient than the social identity of the PFLP for the same cultural elements. What is important to realize is the value this information can provide researchers and practitioners alike. Since the control group consists of violent, Middle Eastern, religiously inspired terrorists, counter terrorism practitioners can compare other, less known, groups to evaluate their possible proclivity toward violence. In the case of the PFLP, where the values for the same questions ranged from 3.10 to 4.20, their social profile is closer toward "Agree" on the survey instrument as compared to the values for HAMAS.

Applying Social Distance Theory to these results allows us to predict, in relation to these values for those questions relating to warriorism, loyalty, and religion, the comparison groups proclivity toward violence. Between the control group and comparison group studied here, there is evidence to suggest that HAMAS is more violent than members of the PFLP.[99] The control group, HAMAS, is more violent and their social profile (based on their social identity) aligned with "Strongly Agree" concerning issues of warriorism, loyalty, and religion. This is in contrast with the PFLP who leans more toward "Agree" concerning the same elements, which suggests that they are not as violent. Additionally, since their values are relatively close to each other, violence between the groups is minimal, if non-existent. This agrees with Black's and Roche's conclusion described within the section on Social Distance Theory.

Generating practical uses of Social Identity Theory and Social Distance Theory is critical to combating violence by terrorist organizations. This thesis built hypothesis on

[99] One indicator of this is information taken from the START Global Terrorism Database - (2). This database, operated by the, University of Maryland, lists 115 separate terrorists incidents conducted by HAMAS for the time period 2000-2004, while only 13 separate terrorists incidents for the PFLP for same time period. See, http://209.232.239.37/gtd2/ (accessed on September 26, 2008) for more information.

the possibility of developing practical applications from the measurement of social identity. To review, the Hypothesis asserted in the beginning chapters of this thesis stated the following:

I. It is possible to develop and implement a survey instrument, incorporating a Likert scale, to measure the social identity of a known violent terrorist organization. This results in a quantifiable number (or numbers) representing the social identity of that terrorist organization, which describes a social profile of that terrorist group.

II. The same survey instrument can measure the social identity of a different organization, also resulting in a quantifiable number describing the social profile of that organization.

III. With a social identity of both organizations having been calculated using a common survey instrument, it is now possible to compare these values using Social Distance Theory and make presumptions as to the proclivity of violence by the second group.

Using open-source interviews of members of HAMAS provided an acceptable data set for measuring their social identity for use in confirming Hypothesis I. Basing survey instruments on already established research, and accurately conducting a content analysis to serve as respondents to interviews, measuring and quantifying social identity of terrorist organizations is viable and generates data for use in future comparisons. Using the same survey instrument with a different data set representing a different organization can provide basis for comparison, confirming Hypothesis II. Furthermore, this quantifiable number serves as a social profile of the respective organizations. Comparisons of two terrorist groups, one which is active and violent, HAMAS, and the other which has been much less active in recent years, the PFLP, shows Hypothesis III proves accurate. Providing further evidence of this conclusion, there were approximately 415 violent attacks by HAMAS from January 2004 to March 2008, but only approximately 15 attacks by the PFLP for the same period.[100]

The underlining theme of this research paper is to suggest it is time to start developing practical application from various social psychological models to apply to the

[100] Data taken from the Worldwide Incident Tracking System, National Counter Terrorism Center, http://wits.nctc.gov/RunSearchQuick.do, (accessed on September 26, 2008).

terrorism threat. The hypothesis stated within this research articulated one possible method of accomplishing this goal using two specific, methodologically rigorous and academically accepted, theories: Social Identity Theory and Social Distance Theory. It is clear that this thesis is only the first step in a complicated and complex process, but the journey has begun.

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IX. FURTHER RESEARCH

As mentioned previously, terrorism as an object of serious study is relatively new. Every day, dozen's of books, research papers, and media reports add to the growing body of knowledge facilitating the understanding of the terrorism threat. This thesis aimed to contribute to that growing body of knowledge, providing future scholars a jumping off point to develop theories and practical applications to stop violent acts of terrorism. The research, methodology, and unique use of data used within this thesis helped prove the stated hypotheses. However, since terrorism is a new field of study, it is important that others build upon these findings.

One area to improve upon which is immediately apparent is to test these hypothesis against a larger data set. This takes into account comparisons with other studies of Social Identity Theory and considers other dynamics of terrorist cells. The size of a terrorist cell, size of a terrorist organization, and the lack of interaction between terrorists outside of their cells all plays a role in developing the size of the optimum data set. Future studies of the concepts within this paper will require waiting until more data becomes available within the media, print, or from other sources such as interviews conducted by the different intelligences agencies.

It would also be interesting and analytically helpful to diverge from religiously inspired/separatists as respondents and consider terrorists in general. The data was constrained for this study to test the initial intent of the hypothesis, but since it has shown to be successful, perhaps looking at a slightly broader range of terrorists might also prove successful. Since the focus would be slightly broader, it is very likely that a larger data set is available considering the numbers of interviews and studies with other terrorists. This could dovetail with larger research concentrating on terrorists outside the context of those individuals from the Middle East who are engaged in religiously inspired terrorism. Questions to ask within this context would be, "What cultural aspects contribute to similarities in social identity between all terrorists, not just those of a particular type or

from a specific organization?" "Can social identity be viable with a broad data set, or do the respondents need to be 'closer' to work as the hypothesis have stated?"

Another area within which deserves considerable attention is analyzing other cultural or behavioral external inputs as determinants of social identity. This thesis looked primarily at the warrior attitude, loyalty, and religion. Other cultural aspects such as language, exposure to different cultures, and even acceptance of different cultures would be viable to a study such as this. It could also apply to broader research incorporating larger sets of respondents rather than limiting it to just Middle Eastern terrorist groups.

Finally, to further test the validity of these hypotheses, future scholars should develop similar social identity survey instruments that could apply to different individuals prone to violence such as inner city gangs. A first look, there are many similarities between the behavior of terrorists and the behavior of some violent gangs. Since there are unfortunately numerous incarcerated gang members, the data set would not be as difficult to develop. Additionally, gangs have been under significant study by criminologists, psychologists, and sociologist and there is ample work to draw from without starting form scratch. Developing the model to stop gang violence, or more specifically stopping an individual form joining in the first place, would be another worthy effort in developing practical applications using Social Identity Theory and Social Distance Theory.

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